



Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research

Connecting Policy, Practice, and Education Through Advancement of Research

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STATEMENT REGARDING RESEARCH FREEDOM

The Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research (IASWR) is deeply concerned about the recent publicly-reported challenges to specific National Institutes of Health (NIH)-funded behavioral and social science research as well as its peer review process. While IASWR respects Congress's responsibility for oversight, these challenges to specific, already-funded research projects seem beyond the scope of oversight. The very public discourse that is emerging in the various perspectives on NIH's research, concerning matters of sexuality and gender, indicate the need for additional translation of such research in ways that help the public to understand its relevance to improving the social and behavioral health of our citizens.

Social workers are committed to conducting research, translating research into language and concepts that the average consumer can understand, utilizing research-tested practice methods in assisting people to make decisions to improve their lives, and advocating for research-grounded public policy. While IASWR appreciates the efforts of Congress to enlighten the public as to the relevance and usefulness of research which at times may seem abstract and abstruse to the end-user, it is hoped that the end result of the recent questions regarding a list of specific grants produces greater understanding of the importance of research with vulnerable and at-risk populations.

The issues involved in the research being called into question by the Traditional Values Coalition and certain Members of Congress impact the lives of many Americans. It is important that reasoned, research-based knowledge inform our nation's health and welfare policies. We encourage the efforts of all who resist efforts to inhibit the exercise of scientific freedom and the integrity of the scientific community of which the NIH is exemplar.

The Institute for the Advancement of Social Work Research is a Washington, DC based non-profit organization. IASWR works to improve the lives of vulnerable populations by advocating for research to strengthen the social work profession's capacity to address complex social needs, and to contribute to improved prevention and treatment interventions, services, and policies.

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